

KI furniture brings versatility and a sense of heritage to PwC's new Belfast office

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PwC, a renowned professional services provider, has made a significant investment in the city of Belfast by relocating its offices to Merchant Square.

The move to the city centre comes from a desire to not only support the growth of the company, but to signal its confidence in the area and encourage other businesses to take a similar initiative.

The new workplace is spread across 200,000 sq ft over nine floors and provides the regional hub for around 3,000 employees. The building is an amalgamation of three existing structures with a dramatic feature staircase linking floors four, five and six. The hope is that the new office will help to increase employee numbers over the next few years, meaning the design needed to have versatility as well as longevity. To meet both of these requirements, a wide range of **KI** furniture was specified by the lead interior designer, BDP.

On four of the levels, **KI's** Colonnade system is being used to create user-controlled, open-plan spaces which the teams can quickly customise depending on the immediate need. Each Colonnade comprises 800 Series cupboard and drawer units integrated with 800 Series Shelving. Semi-sheer Kvadrat Acoustic Drops curtains feature on each open side of the structure and divide up the space for meeting or work settings. To maximise the system's flexibility, Colonnade Cube stools were also chosen as they can be neatly stored away within the unit's structure. The stools are upholstered in a variety of fabrics and colours to best complement the Colonnade units.

Moveable easels hook over the overhead gantry rails at any point and these are accessorised with magnetic backed whiteboards which also store away neatly in the open shelving when they are not being

used.

Two different colour schemes were specified for the Colonnade systems, one of which uses vibrant colours that echo the shipbuilding heritage of Belfast. Bright yellow powder coated easels pay homage to the nearby Harland and Wolff cranes, whilst bright blue and red powder coats emulate well-established maritime engineering colour schemes.

Annabelle Hadlow, project architect at BDP, said: *"Materials and furniture specification is always important to PwC. We have a fantastic understanding of its design aspirations and how the offices reflect the cities in which they are located whilst providing functional and flexible spaces. For Merchant Square, the furniture was crucial in achieving the right, characteristic design and the right levels of adaptability across all floors."*

Throughout the office space, a variety of other **KI** designs provide seating and tables to support both the impromptu and more focused work practices that are required. These include Zig poseur height tables and Work2.1 Sit-Stand tables in a variety of finishes such as graphite Fenix tops on raw steel, black and yellow under-structures. These tables provide ideal settings for dropdown work and casual collaboration.

KI's Take5 high back armchairs adorn multiple areas and are upholstered in a variety of fabrics and colours. Ruckus chairs on castors are located around collaboration tables and inside the Colonnades. The innovative design of the Ruckus is also ideal for sit-stand tables, allowing a person to either sit in the chair or perch on its backrest, depending on the height setting of the table.

Throughout the building are 800 Series personal lockers fitted with RFID wireless lock technology which can be remotely monitored and controlled by the facility management teams. Some larger versions are also located in the basement area to provide cloak and leisure storage. Other specifications of matching 800 Series cabinets, recycling units, and tambour cupboards – a PwC standard – can also be found in the back office service areas.